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ABSTRACT

Teachers are alienated and dissatisfied with their jobs and often "burn out" because they must work in a bureaucratic structure in which all or most decisions are made by administrators and are expected to be carried out by the professionals, rather than being made by the professionals or in collaboration. This pyramidal structure or organization is based on assumptions about human nature characterized by Douglas MacGregor as Theory X--that is, that humans are lazy, will only do what profits them, and must be forced to work and be closely supervised. In contrast to Theory X is Theory Y, in which humans are seen as having a need for work, to pursue excellence, and to "self-actualize," as Maslow called it. Most organizational researchers today contend that the era of effective Theory X management has passed and should be replaced by a Theory Y-style characterized by an organizational structure flatter than the pyramid, in which cooperation prevails and authority and responsibility are shared among administrators and professionals. Moving toward such a structure would help to solve some of the problems of teacher alienation today. Steps toward more participatory organizational management of schools include the following: (1) development of participative/supportive leadership processes; (2) concern for genuine motivational forces; (3) improved communications; (4) better interaction-influence processes; (5) improved decison-making processes; (6) mutual goal-setting or -ordering processes; and (7) improved control processes, considering individuals and their goals. Public school education will be improved if the hierarchical pyramid crumbles and is replaced by a new symbiosis of professionals and administrators working for conjoined system and individual goals. (KC)

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What To Do When the Pyramid Crumbles:
The Path from XA to YB Leadership

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by

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What To Do When the Pyramid Crumbles:

The Path from XA to YB Leadership

"Both theoretical and empirical work by organizational sociologists suggest that teachers' alienation derives from the type of organizations in which they work. Scott[1] suggests that professionals should find 'autonomous' organizations a more congenial work setting than "hetoronomous' organizations."[2]

Autonomous organizations are characterized by the delegation of control of most professional activities to professional staff. Heteronomous organizations, on the other hand, reserve the control over most professional activities to the administration. Libraries, public schools, and social welfare agencies exemplify heteronomous institutions.

In studying professionalism versus bureaucracy, authorities find them to be alternate methods of organizing responsibilities. Rensis Likert, e.g., speaks of System I - System IV management. System I, at one end of the continuum, marks an autocratic style of management whereas system IV is entirely participatory. (NB - the distinction between autonomous and autocratic.)

The crux of the problem within any organization experiencing organizational conflict is the location of authority. Bureaucracies assert that work is subject to evaluation and control by individuals who derive their authority from principles of hierarchical administration. Professions hold that evaluation and control should rest within the peer group structure. Where ethical standards are involved, professionals choose to be evaluated by members of their association rather than supervisors in an administrative hierarchy.

There are clear indications in education that the conflict between autonomy and heteronomy produces considerable dissatisfaction and conflict.

1. Richard Scott, "Reactions to Supervision in a Heteronomous Professional Organization," Administrative Science Quarterly, 10 (June 1959), 65-81.

2. Harold Cox & James R. Wood. "Organizational Structure and Professional Alienation: The Case of Public School Teachers." Peabody Journal of Education. Nashville, Tn: Vanderbilt University. Volume 58, Number 1, October 1980.

More specifically, why are teachers dissatisfied?

Clark and Siedman (1980) elaborate:

> "Teachers work in isolation from other adults and from each other, with conscripted students, without sufficient technological support, and without offices or private meeting places. They punch time clocks or initial sign-in sheets. Their teaching is interrupted by public address system announcements from administrators. Teachers are observed and rated by supervisors. They employ few or no secretarial services and little or no planning time. The range of decisions over which they exert control ever diminishes as someone tells them what to teach, why students' rights must be protected, why parents and community will have a greater voice in telling them what to do, and how the union is the collective voice for each individual."[3]

To be sure, some of these factors are generic to the system. However, many conditions could be ameliorated through administrative procedures which recognize and value teacher input. Four basic areas of conflict are generally recognized between professionals and bureaucrats:

1. professionals' resistance to bureaucratic rules
2. their rejection of bureaucratic standards
3. their resistance to bureaucratic supervision
4. and their conditional loyalty to bureaucracy.[4]

How administrators relate to their subordinates is largely a function of their basic assumptions about human nature -- how they view man in relation to the world of work. Douglas MacGregor classifies man-work related assumptions into two categories. Let us call them his theory X and his theory Y.

Theory X holds that man is lazy by nature and resents work. He will exert the least effort possible and will not contribute willingly to organizational goals unless he is convinced that there is something in it for him. He continually finds himself at odds with management and will shirk his responsibilities as frequently as he can. In its extreme I call this the Rip Van Winkle syndrome.

It follows from this assumption that administration must consist of close supervision. If workers cannot be trusted or depended upon, administrators

3. Richard J. Clark, Jr., Earl Siedman, Individual Imperatives in Institutional Staff Development," Peabody Journal of Education. Volume 58, Number 1, October 1980.

4. Richard Scott, as cited in Cox and Wood, 10-80.

must set up rigid rules and reward-punishment systems to induce cooperation. Important decisions must be made at the top, thereby establishing a rigid hierarchical structure and a clearcut chain-of-command. Subordinate input into decision-making is not requested; it would probably be of little value anyway. Employees are paid simply to do what they are told. Their place is to follow orders and to produce. Anyone who does not conform does not fit into the organizational structure.

Theory X gives rise to a complete set of administrative principles (which MacGregor labels A). An XA manager believes that he knows best what is good for the organization. He will set up the rules and devise mechanisms to ensure that they are observed. There will be clearcut reward-punishment systems. Roughly those who follow the rules will have pay raises and promotions; those who flout the rules will suffer the consequences. Organizational policy is not negotiable.

Theory Y, on the other hand, holds that man has a natural inclination to work and to improve his lot. Throughout life he strives to reach his potential. David McLelland calls it the need for achievement; Henri Bergson, l'élan vital; Abraham Maslow, self-actualization. Whatever one calls it, man has a sense of responsibility that he brings to the work-site. He is not only capable, he is willing to contribute to the success of the organization that employs his services. Since he is on the firing line, his contributions may be very useful and practical. What he needs is a chance to collaborate with administration in problem-solving strategies.

Theory Y requires a different type of management approach which we shall label B. YB management recognizes the potential wealth of its work force. It is eager to open communication channels that will facilitate problem-solving. Since it views the working man as cooperative and responsible, it recognizes the importance of satisfaction as a factor in work production.

A YB administration shuns the bureaucratic notion that all important decisions are made at the top. It de-emphasizes the existing power structure in favor of increased participative management. It provides opportunities for subordinates to have input into the organizational decisions that affect their work and their lives. It seeks above all to eliminate factors that cause subordinate alienation.

How does this apply to educational administrators and, more specifically, to teachers? Cox and Wood have tested the following hypotheses:

1. Alienation among teachers will be greater:
   (a) the less frequently they participate in the decision-making process;
   (b) the more rigid, in their perception, the organizational hierarchy of authority;
   (c) the greater the degree of job codification; and
   (d) the more rigidly rules are enforced.
2. Teachers' belief in an administrator's willingness to consider teachers' views will vary inversely with that administrator's level within the hierarchy.

After researching 590 teachers in a school system employing approximately 1,000 teachers (with a 47% return rate), Cox and Wood conclude as follows. Participation in decision making negatively associates with teacher alienation. Hierarchy of authority positively associates with teacher alienation. Job codification positively associates with teacher alienation. Rigidity of rule enforcement positively associates with alienation.[5]

The assumption appears valid that public schools by nature require some sort of heteronomous control. Teachers are also more than ever voicing their need for professional autonomy. The net result is that, according to Clark and Siedman, "institutional and individual goals in the public schools have never been less congruent."[6]

To reconcile differences between institutional and individual goals in education, I advocate the path from XA to YB. Though simpler to explain than to effect, this path has the following milestones:

1. Development of participative/supportive leadership processes: Superiors must recognize that three factors interact to cause effective leadership: the behavior of leaders, the behavior of followers, and the nature of the situation.
2. Concern for genuine motivational forces: YB administrators recognize that cooperation accomplishes more than coercion. Esprit-de-corps, optimism, and morale are more conducive to production than hygiene factors. According to Herzberg[7], hygiene factors contribute to job dissatisfaction

5. Correlation coefficients respectively are: -.47, .45, .40, .40.
6. R. J. Clark and Earl Siedman, Peabody Journal of Education.
7. Frederick Herzberg, "One More Time: How Do You Motivate Employees?" Harvard Business Review; [illegible]

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whereas genuine motivators lead to satisfaction. XA management concentrates on such hygiene factors as policies, supervision and the role of the supervisor, work conditions, salaries, and fringe benefits. YB management stresses achievement, recognition, responsibility, growth, advancement, and the like.

3. Improved communications: Amitai Etzioni[8] talks about the directions of communications. Heteronomous organizations have rigid hierarchical structures which utilize vertical communication networks. This vertical structure works best for supervisors since it enables them to send one-way communiqués. The underlying assumption is that subordinates always understand the purpose of the order and experience no need to respond. Autonomous organizations, on the other hand, rely on horizontal communications. Decisions are made amidst extensive, friendly interaction that pervades the system.[9] According to Blake and Mouton,[10] system IV managers know how to manipulate the delicate balance between task-orientation and concern for people. The manager's principal responsibility is to attain effective production and high morale through the participation and involvement of people in a team approach.
4. Better interaction-influence processes: YB managers who are people-as well as task-oriented seek out their subordinates' concerns and try to understand them. They are tuned in to the organizational climate and have quite accurate perceptions about their subordinates. In turn, subordinates have quite accurate perceptions of superiors. XA managers, on the other hand, function as though human concerns have nothing to do with production so long as tight control is maintained.
5. Improved decision-making processes: In assessing the XA or YB character of his organization, one should look at where decisions are formally made. XA managers will insist, though mistakenly, that for the good of the organization decisions must be made at

8. Amitai Etzioni. A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations. New York: Free Press, 1961.

9. cf. Rensis Likert. The Human Organization. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company. 1967.

10. Jane Blake and Robert Mouton. The Managerial Grid. Houston, Texas: Gulf, 1964.

the top. YB managers will bring decision making to the level where the most adequate and accurate information can be obtained. This requires effective interaction-influence processes within the system.

6. Mutual goal setting or ordering processes: XA management systems concentrate on policing lower echelons to ensure that top level orders are carried out. When conflicts arise, quality control suffers and excessive absence or turnover is experienced. YB management systems involve subordinates in goal setting. Goals are accepted and concern for quality performance is likely to be felt throughout the organization.
7. Improved control processes: Any system works best when it is autonomous; that is, when every member has a vested interest in working for the organization rather than against it. Likert argues that YB managers are sensitive to intervening variables whereas XA managers reduce management and supervision to cause-effect. They use their authority to cause things to happen, and they believe the desired effects will invariably follow. Effective leaders remain sensitive to the internal state and health of the organization. They consider the motivations, attitudes, perceptions, and individual goals of their subordinates. More importantly, they incorporate these into the complex interaction, communication, and decision-making processes of the organization.

Will your pyramid crumble? Perhaps in the 1980s, it is time to chip away at it a little bit. Certainly if we wish to align institutional and individual goals in the public school system, it is time to make full use of our teachers' potential. Statistics show that the current teaching force in America is better educated and more experienced than ever. Yet we continue to develop heteronomous systems that overlook and alienate teachers, causing stress, burnout and/or psychological withdrawal.

As educational administration grows from an ill-defined process to a science, the literature informs us that bureaucracy as an organizational model[11] has passed its prime. We have gone from a Weberian typology (Type I) to a professional typology (Type III). Type III is characterized by shared

11. cf. Max Weber. The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, Talcott Parsons (ed.). New York: Free Press, 1947.

decision making between the hierarchical administrators and the professional staff.

The pyramids of Egypt took years of collaboration and cooperation to erect. The construction procedures and the technical skills required to perform the work still defy modern attempts to explain them. Surely the sophistication of the pyramids required the expertise of many.

It is ironic that today the pyramid is used to symbolize bureaucratic structure or hierarchy of authority. What education needs is another symbol -- one that illustrates the symbiosis effected by professionals working at different levels for different consequences. Figuratively speaking, perhaps it is not so bad for the pyramid to crumble.

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